



Illustration by Jeanne R. Janish,  
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## ***CAREX COMOSA*** **BRISTLY SEDGE**

Bristly Sedge is a grass-like perennial with clustered stems, 50-100 cm tall and arising from a short rhizome. The long, glabrous leaves are flat and 4-11 mm wide. Flowers are clustered in cylindrical spikes, 2-7 cm long. The lowest bract is much longer than the inflorescence. Male flowers are borne in a narrow spike at the top; 3-5 nodding female spikes, 15 mm thick, occur below. The glabrous, spreading, pale green, lance-shaped perigynia are 5-8 mm long, and have a long beak ending in two long, slender, divergent lobes. The papery scales subtending the perigynia are 1-2 mm long with a pointed tip that is up to 6 mm long. Each perigynium has 3 stigmas and a 3-sided achene. Fruit matures in July.

Other closely related coarse sedges with nodding spikes are *CAREX HYSTRICINA* and *C. UTRICULATA*, but neither of these species have perigynia with sharp-pointed, spreading lobes. A hand lens is needed for positive identification.